

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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R 231320Z JUL 74

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5950

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1485

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS, EG

SUBJ: REACTION TO EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN COMMUNIQUE

1. SUMMARY. LOCAL ARAB REACTION TO EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN COMMUNIQUE HAS BEEN MIXED BUT RATHER APATHETIC AND CHARACTERIZED IN GENERAL BY UNCERTAINTY AND ENHANCED FEELING THAT OTHERS WILL DETERMINE FATE OF WEST BANK WITH LITTLE REGARD FOR VIEW OF RESIDENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. OUR INQUIRIES AMONG ARAB CONTACTS HAVE ELICITED RATHER APATHETIC REACTION TO EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN COMMUNIQUE. THIS APPARENTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO CONFUSION AND UNCERTAINTY OVER MEANING OF VARIOUS AMBIGUOUSLY-PHRASED PASSAGES, NOTABLY THAT NAMING PLO AS LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIANS EXCEPT THOSE RESIDING IN H.K. OF JORDAN. WEST BANKERS NATURALLY WONDER WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THEM, AND SUBSEQUENT INTERPRETATIONS AND "CLARIFICATIONS" HAVE DONE LITTLE TO MAKE THINGS CLEARER. ADDITIONAL FACTOR IS BOOST COMMUNIQUE SEEMS TO HAVE GIVEN TO ALREADY WIDESPREAD FEELING AMONG WEST BANKERS THAT THEY WILL HAVE LITTLE IF ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT THEIR FUTURE, WHICH THEY FEAR

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IS LARGELY IN HANDS OF ARAB GOVERNMENTS (AND MAJOR POWERS) WHO,

DESPITE PROTESTATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS, LOOK IN FIRST INSTANCE TO THEIR OWN INTERESTS. ONE SOURCE SUMMED UP MAJORITY REACTION BY SAYING PEOPLE ARE "DEPRESSED". ANOTHER CHARACTERIZED IT AS "WAIT AND SEE".

3. REACTION NOT ALL NEGATIVE, HOWEVER. LEADING JERUSALEM ARABIC DAILY AL QUDS IN JULY 19 EDITORIAL SUPPORTED COMMUNIQUE AS FURTHERING "POLICY OF RECONCILIATION AND COORDINATION" THAT HAD ENABLED ARABS SUCCESSFULLY TO WAGE OCTOBER WAR AND OIL "BATTLE" AND TO MOVE POSITIVELY AND CONFIDENTLY ON INTERNATIONAL SCENE. EDITORIAL INTERPRETED COMMUNIQUE AS ENCOURAGING DISENGAGEMENT "ALL ALONG THE JORDAN RIVER", GIVING REPRESENTATION OF PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN - ON BOTH BANKS - TO HUSSEIN, AND GIVING REPRESENTATION OF PALESTINIANS WITH REGARD TO THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS, "WHICH ARE OF GREATER IMPORTANCE AND MORE MENINGFUL," TO THE PLO. IT CONCLUDED THAT COMMUNIQUE WAS NOT FINAL MGVE AND FURTHER SUMMIT MEETINGS OF SADAT, ASSAD, HUSSEIN, FEISAL AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS WOULD CERTAINLY PROVIDE "CLARIFICATIONS TO MANY SEEMINGLY UNCLEAR POINTS."

4. JULY 22 EDITORIAL IN ARABIC DAILY AL SHAAB PREDICTABLY IS BIT-TERLY CRITICAL OF COMMUNIQUE AS DIVERTING PALESTINIANS FROM THEIR "LIBERATION COURSE" AND COMMENDS PLO/EC JULY 21 STATEMENT.

5. COMMENT. ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNIQUE WHETHER BY PRO OR ANTI-HUSSEIN FACTIONS SEEMS TO BE THAT IT SOMEWHAT STRENGTHENED HUSSEIN'S POSITION. WHILE THIS, OF COURSE, PLEASING TO HIS SUPPORTERS, IT AROUSES SUSPICIONS OF MAJORITY OF WEST BANKERS WHO OPPOSE RETURN TO PRE-1967 STATUS.
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